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AUTHOR Calvin, Richmond E.
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ABSTRACT

Teacher aides have become an accepted part of a large number of school districts throughout the United States and can be seen in inner-city, suburban, and rural school districts, as well as in private and parochial schools. Despite the concern and apparent need for teacher aides, many problems have arisen concerning the definition of their duties. Educators have found numerous discrepancies between teachers' and administrators' definitions of responsibilities of teacher aides. Duties pertaining to teacher aides can be subdivided according to instructional and noninstructional tasks. The definition for each subdivision depends on the community, educational attainment of the aides, and the philosophy of the school district involved. (Author/HMD)

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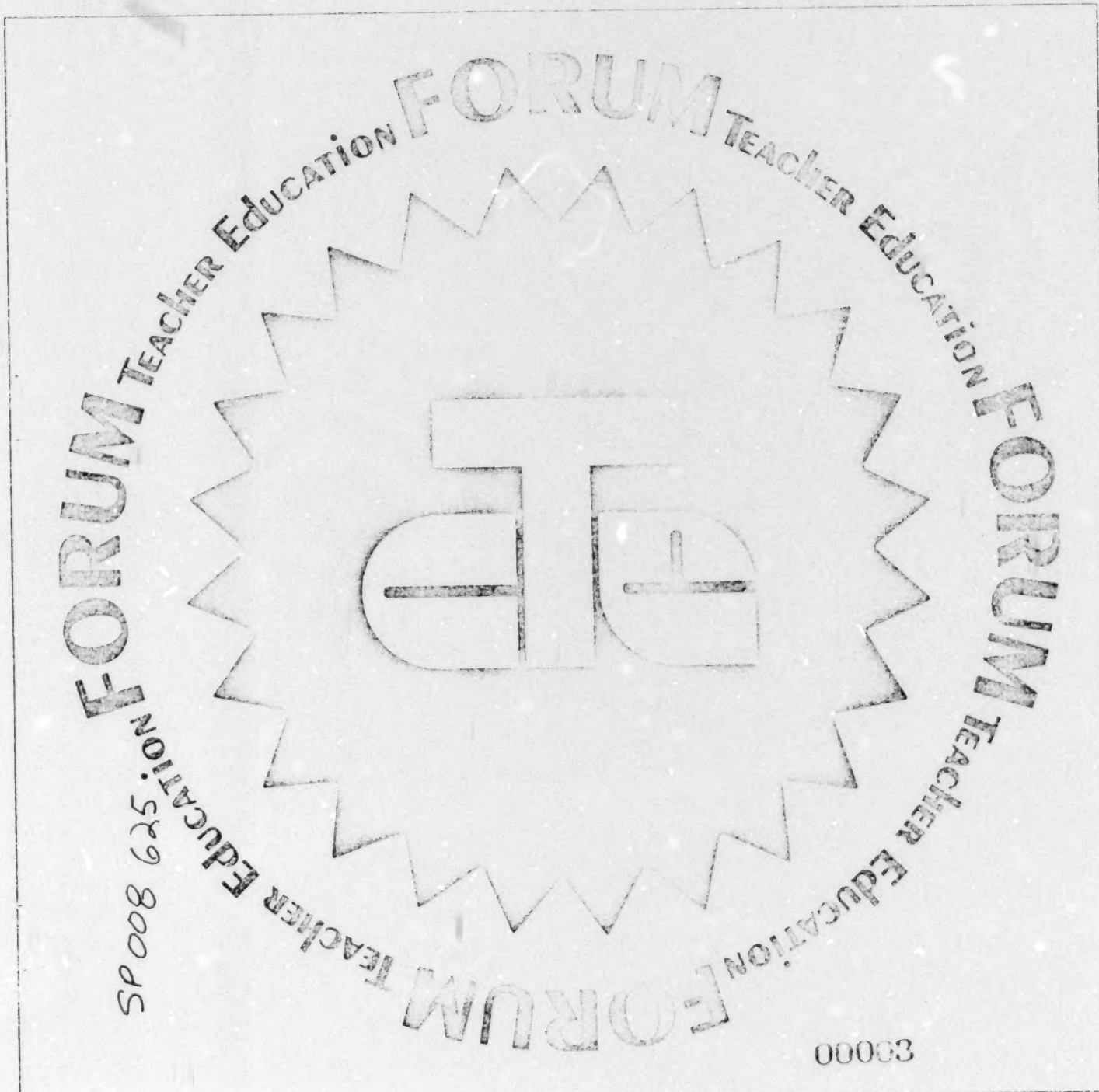

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TEACHER EDUCATION FORUM

The *Forum Series* is basically a collection of papers dealing with all phases of teacher education including inservice training and graduate study. It is intended to be a catalyst for idea exchange and interaction among those interested in all areas of teacher education. The reading audience includes teachers, school administrators, governmental and community administrators of educational agencies, graduate students and professors. The *Forum Series* represents a wide variety of content: position papers, research or evaluation reports, compendia, state-of-the-art analyses, reactions/critiques of published materials, case studies, bibliographies, conference or convention presentations, guidelines, innovative course/program descriptions, and scenarios are welcome. Manuscripts usually average ten to thirty double-spaced typewritten pages; two copies are required. Bibliographical procedures may follow any accepted style; however, all footnotes should be prepared in a consistent fashion. Manuscripts should be submitted to Richard A. Earle, editor. Editorial decisions are made as soon as possible; accepted papers usually appear in print within two to four months.

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RICHMOND E. CALVIN

division of teacher education
309 education building
indiana university
bloomington, indiana 47401

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DELINEATION OF DUTIES

Background

Teacher aides have become an accepted and appreciated part of a large number of American school districts. The teacher aides, who work with children from K-12, are a welcome sight to administrators, teachers and parents, since they perform a number of duties heretofore performed by classroom teachers. The presence of the teacher aides has been beneficial to inner-city, suburban, and rural school districts, well as private and parochial educational institutions. Generally, classroom teachers have assigned to aides those duties which they least enjoy performing. The National Commission on Teacher Educational and Professional Standards (NCTEPS) sees subjects, kinds of community, and the educational orientation of the school district. According to the NCTEPS, the school system should be responsible for the formulation of general duties for aides, while the principal and homeroom teacher should be responsible for specific tasks and supervision of the aides. Teachers, who are constantly in contact with aides, should be responsible for su ervising and providing direction. The school district might, with input for representatives of instructional and administrative staffs, formulate broad guidelines for the aides and allow the principal and concerned teacher(s) to develop specific tasks.

Rationale for Delineation

Despite the apparent need for teacher aides, many problems related to their duties have arisen (Bazeli, 1969). In response to these problems, several attempts have been made to help clarify the duties of the aides. Seyfarth and Canady (1970)

RICHMOND E. CALVIN is *assistant professor of education and university coordinator of the career opportunities program*, Division of Education, Indiana University, South Bend, Indiana.

found numerous discrepancies between how teachers and administrators defined the duties of teacher aides. Approximately twenty-five states have enacted legislation relative to teacher aides and most of the legislation is basically concerned with their utilization, not their duties. Consequently, a delineation of some possible duties performed by the aides can be very helpful for administrators, teacher's aides, and parents. This delineation should prove helpful to administrators and teachers who are responsible for supervising aides and, therefore, increase the possibility that the aides will not perform duties which they are not certified to perform. Klebaner (1967) believes that if the purposes and duties related to the aides are well defined, administrators will have little difficulty in the supervision of aides. Hopefully, after delineating the aides' duties concisely and clearly, the morale and attitude of the aides will be improved.

PROGRESS OF AIDES

At its inception, the idea of having teacher aides in the same classroom with teachers appeared confusing. Many teachers were initially hesitant to accept the new non-professional person. In addition to posing questions concerning professional competency and duties, the idea aroused skepticism because many felt that the aides would eventually take power away from the teachers (Alspaugh and Kerr, 1971). Further, many wondered if the teacher aide concept would jeopardize the teacher-learning process. These fears have diminished with the advent of new found data and research indicating the advantages of the aides to the educational process. The research has generally indicated the presence of aides in the school has had a significant impact upon learning (Bazeli, 1969).

There is a growing body of data which indicates that the teacher aides allow the teachers to spend more time with the children and preparing for classes. It is also felt that learning will also be enhanced if the teachers can spend more time

with their students. The teachers can, therefore, become more efficient teachers and diagnosticians (Klebaner, 1967). Aides are no longer considered secondary school personnel, but are looked upon as knowledgeable persons who can articulate to the community and students a special talent.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

The teacher aides can be utilized in a variety of learning situations, grade levels and subject areas. At times, it may be feasible to have the aides attend faculty meetings, or visit parents and other interested groups.

Alspaugh and Kerr (1971) state that teacher aides' duties vary according to the needs of the school as well as those of the aides. In some districts aides perform instructional and non-instructional duties equally. In other districts, aides may spend a majority of their time performing non-instructional and clerical duties. The most visible duties relate to assisting the teacher in working with individual students. Borstad and Devar (1970) indicate that teacher aides are generally assigned duties based on their educational, personal and professional qualifications.

Teacher aides have been introduced in many schools, specifically to improve instructional services by relieving teachers of the many non-instructional and time consuming duties that have traditionally prevented them from providing essential services (Bazeli, 1969). Traditionally, teachers have had to perform the duties of housekeeper, nurse, bookkeeper, plumber and many others. Seyfarth and Canady (1970) believed that teacher aides perform a variety of duties which are beneficial to them as a professional group. The aides' duties also differ quite extensively depending on the district's policy; in fact, many aides performed different duties among various schools within a district (Pino, 1966). It is, therefore, important that we temper any discussion on the duties of teacher aides with the understanding

that these duties differ among school districts and possibly among schools in a particular district. In order to further clarify the duties of the teacher aide, two categories are utilized, instructional and non-instructional duties.

INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES

What are the instructional duties of the teacher aide? The instructional aides spend the bulk of their time in classroom learning situations under the auspices of a teacher (Alspaugh and Kerr). The instructional duties of teacher aides are generally dependent on their prior academic and professional training, the school district's policy and the relationship between the aides and teacher(s). It is felt by many educators that the instructional duties vary among the various grade levels, as well as in individual schools (Alspaugh and Kerr, 1971). The following instructional duties are generally performed by aides:

1. Assistance in remedial work as assigned by the supervising teacher.
2. Reinforcing principles and materials given to the student by the teacher.
3. Correcting and recording student's class work.
4. Assisting the teacher in skill building.
5. Providing individual attention to students who are experiencing difficulties in mastering specific learning concepts.
6. Assistance in monitoring diagnostic and prognostic and other forms of testing required in the school.
7. Supervising children in practical work projects in the library and in small group discussions.
8. Preparing teaching materials for particular subjects.
9. Preparing audio-visual aids for classroom use.
10. Attending in-service and pre-service activities relating to teacher aides.
11. Assisting in organizing and coordinating learning strategies for students.
12. Assisting in writing assignments and developing materials for bulletin boards.
13. Securing supplies and materials for conducting particular class projects.

14. Assisting substitute teachers when the classroom teacher is absent.

15. Demonstrating concepts and principles to assist the teacher in particular subject areas.

16. Obtaining new and innovative ideas for the utilization in classrooms.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES

What non-instructional duties do teacher aides perform? The non-instructional duties of the aides are related to the particular school district's philosophy, classroom teacher, and the professional and academic training of the aides. More specifically, some general non-instructional duties are as follows:

1. Recording students' attendance and tardiness.

2. Collecting monies for lunch and specific school events.

3. Typing specific projects, reports, letters, etc.

4. Assisting teachers in preparing written reports for parents and other selected groups.

5. Setting up audio-visual materials for the teacher.

6. Supervising students outside of the classroom, in areas such as the hall, lunchroom, study hall and on the play ground.

7. Supervising of field trips, hikes and other extracurricular events.

8. Assisting teachers in classifying and organizing books and materials.

9. Cleaning classrooms and other areas when necessary.

10. Serving as a liaison to the parents and community when necessary.

SUMMARY

One cannot overlook the importance of teacher aides and their relationships to education. Basically what has the teacher aide contributed to the profession? We can generally delineate two broad areas where contributions have been made, the direct delivery of special kinds of instructional and non-instructional services and providing needed services for research. It is only recently that the teacher

aide concept received some attention, as an addition to the instructional team. The dependence on the aides as chief facilitators of learning should not take place, since this is the teacher's prime duty. The presence of the aides should enable teachers to become more efficient. Teachers should also have more time to prepare for classes to develop individualized instruction, to prepare for special students' problems and to become a more proficient diagnostician with respect to student's evaluation.

The teacher aide concept, like so many other educational concepts, cannot be successful unless teachers, administrators, parents and other concerned citizens understand the duties of the aides. If the duties of the aides are not perceived properly there is a calculable danger in the employment of the teacher aides in any school system.

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